



Wyoming Department of Agriculture

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May 27, 2005

Wyoming Game & Fish Department
c/o Scott Talbott, Assistant Chief, Wildlife Division
3030 Energy Lane, Suite 100
Casper, WY 82604

Dear Mr. Talbott:

Following are the comments from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) on the Wyoming Game & Fish Department (WGFD) Chapter 58, Notification of Grizzly Bear Relocation Regulation.

Our comments are specific to our mission within state government, which is to be dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this proposal will have major impacts upon our agriculture industry, our natural resources and the welfare of our citizens, we believe it's important that we be kept informed of proposed actions and decisions and that we continue to be provided the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

We support the efforts of the Wyoming Legislature and the WGFD for the recently signed W.S. 23-1-1001 and the implementing regulation Chapter 58, Notification of Grizzly Bear Relocation, respectively. The implementation of both will take additional time and effort on behalf of the WGFD.

We recommend the following changes to the proposed regulation. The grizzly bear territories are expanding throughout Western Wyoming. We believe it will become increasingly crucial to know if a bear is within a specified distance of private land. With this knowledge, landowners will be able to prepare for the bear and make any necessary adjustments with their residence, property, or livestock operations.

As written, Chapter 58 fails to include the following provision of W.S. 23-1-1001 (c), "The annual report shall include the total number and relocation area of each grizzly bear relocated during the previous calendar year. The department shall also make available the annual report to the public." This provision of the new law needs to be included in this implementing regulation.

We strongly support this report and request the WGFD send out a press release to notify the public of the finalized report each year. The report should be mailed to all interested parties and posted on your website for future access. The new statute does not ask for specifics in regards to

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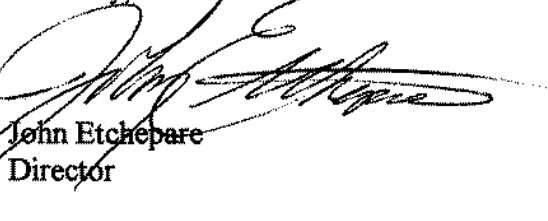
each bear's last sighting, distance from relocation sight, and previous history, but we believe this information is critical to the safety of our citizens. The previous history could include the original capture sight, past relocations, and a detailed incidence report.

We believe the three previously mentioned items for the annual report are vital to those who live in the area where the bear was previously captured as well as to those who live near the bear's relocation site. The original capture site can give crucial scientific information to migration routes or the reestablishment of home territories. We also believe the past relocation and detailed incidence reports would be important for when bears are relocated to make adjustments or preparation. If the WGFED knows a bear chronically rummages through trash bins, raids chicken coops, is attracted to bird feeders, or feeds on livestock or their carcasses, or fruit trees, the landowners can try and bear-proof their property and surroundings. Obviously this information needs to be included in the press release, sent out within five days of the relocation.

We appreciate your efforts with the Chapter 58 regulation. We look forward to seeing the additions previously mentioned and the regulation implemented in 2005.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



John Etchepare
Director

JE/jw

Cc: Governor's Planning Office
Wyoming Stock Growers Association
Wyoming Wool Growers Association
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming State Grazing Board